**The Gospel of Mark Sermon #2**

Theme of Mark:

Jesus: Messiah and Son of God: suffering servant and savior of mankind.

Theme verse: Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Q: Did his life agree with his stated purpose/mission? What about you?

Mark 1:14-20 Jesus is calling disciples.

The time has come. The Kingdom of God is at hand.

Drop your nets.

Follow immediately.

Start fishing for people.

Mark 1:21-45 The power and authority of Jesus over both the physical world (healing a leper and many more) and the spiritual world (casting out demons).

And of course, the people are amazed at superhero Jesus!

Mark 1:40-45

Jesus is indignant. Why? Because of the way lepers were treated.

a. Jesus touches the unclean. (which, technically, was a violation of the Law of Moses)

But, we see in Mark 2:23-27 The Sabbath (and even the Law of Moses in general) was made for man, not man for the Sabbath, and Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath.

But Jesus indignancy was not that they were obeying the Law of Moses, but their attitude toward lepers. (remember our BT two weeks ago. Simon: Look at this woman!

b. Jesus heals the unclean.

We too, were unclean. We were unlovable. We had addictions, etc. But God proves his love for us in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us.

Will you hang out with the “unclean?”

Mark 2:1-12 Jesus’ authority. Q: How much authority does Jesus have? He can even forgive sins!!!

Mark 2:13-17 Jesus calls Matthew—a tax collector!!!

The point: Your past does not matter. Jesus is turning things upside down. All that matters is your answer to this question: Will you answer the call to “come, follow me.”

2:18-22 Jesus: Now that I am here, everything is new. I am not improving things. I am starting from scratch. God is not trying to reform our old self. He is trying to replace our old self with a completely new self.

Summary;

Jesus is astounding

Jesus has all authority

Jesus has power over both the spiritual and the physical world

Yet, despite all this, Jesus has great compassion.

Jesus wants to make everything new. Let’s get on board that train.

What is our superhero Jesus doing? He is healing many, he is working miracles and he is teaching in parables. And he is doing it all immediately (*euthys*)!

I. But first his family comes for a visit… Mark 3:20-21 and 31-34.

Jesus’ lifestyle and his vision to take on the world is so ambitious that his family find themselves thinking that he is acting irrationally. He is too audacious.

Someone had the crazy idea of creating oscillating electric currents in a wire, and from that, producing light waves that could pass through space and be picked up by a similar receiving circuit, and thus radio and TV and cell phones were born.

That is what they thought when John Von Neumann and Alan Turing thought of the idea of creating banks of tubes capable of being either “on” or “off” to represent 1’s and 0’s and therefore to do store information and do calculations at unimaginable speed and complexity. And thus the computer was born.

The world thinks that our plan to bring in a new kingdom is crazy. God’s kingdom/God’s plan is an audacious one. It is to transform the world, one soul at a time.

We do not use the ways of the world. We do not use political power or money or a big advertising campaign.

It is audacious to think that we could move here, starting from 4 people who do not even know each other, and produce a church of hundreds and a campus ministry of many dozen.

But that is probably what they thought about Moses’ plan to ask Pharaoh to let God’s people go. You are going to tell him, “Let my people (your most important work force) go!”

They are coming to take him away, hey hey, hah, hah ho ho…. To the funny farm.

But it did not turn out that way… Mark 3:31-34 Here are my family. Here are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does God’s will…

Q: Are you ready to do God’s will? Here is your new family!

I. Mark 4:1-20 Parable of the Soils (a better name that Parable of the Sower)

Parables both conceal and reveal. (Mark 4:11)

Jesus used every-day examples.

Today he might use a football example, or a video game or pop culture. For them? Farming!

v. 3 Jesus: Listen up!!!!!! Pay attention. This is about you!!!

What is the seed? It is the Word of God (Luke 8:11)

What are the soils? They are our individual hearts on which the seed falls. Today, the soils are you!!!

1. The hard path. (v. 4, 15) This is the path along which people walk as they work the field. Narrow. Possibly paved with stones.

Hard heart. Never even give it a chance. You’re here. You’re not this soil.

But if you are this soil, then you need to do some plowing!!!

2. Rocky soil. (v. 5-6, 16-17) Shallow heart. No root. No depth. Fair weather Christian. Trouble comes, fall away.

They became a Christian because it was exciting, or because they liked the relationships, or because it gave them a good feeling. Gave a sense of purpose.

But then they lost a job and moved for a “better job” or a family member fell into crisis, or they had a problem with one of the members, or….

Jer 17:7-8 Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.

So, what do you do to fix this? Send down roots.

Begin to trust in God rather than church, fun, good relationships,…

Start a genuine prayer life.

Get real with someone about yourself.

Make a decision to devote yourself to God first.

3. Thorny soil. (v. 7, 18-19) It did not die, but it did not produce any fruit. Mixed heart. Not a “bad” heart. Not a heart that does not love God, but a heart that has mixed loyalties. This is the divided heart.

This heart probably actually makes it to heaven, but does not experience the blessing God wants for them in this life. (Parable of the Weeds Matt 13:24-30)

When I plant a garden, I do not simply turn the weeds into the soil. I pull them out. Why?

You cannot just break off the dandelions. You need to go down to the root.

You don’t trim the vine, work around the edges.

Q: What is growing in your garden? What is the weed you need to pull?

Is it deceitfulness, lust, greed, laziness, alcohol, anger, gambling, greed, selfish ambition.

These may not be the “obvious” sins. It may be (v.18)

The worries of this life

The deceitfulness of wealth

The desire for things (the storage industry)

Is yours a divided heart? Are you whole-hearted? Who can you think of who is truly whole-hearted for God?

Q: Do you want to be fruitful? What might be choking you spiritually?

4. Good soil. Result? A lot of fruit. Full life. Productive life. Life with meaning.

John 15:16 I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.

What is the good soil?

a. It is turned over and soft

b. It puts down deep roots in God

c. It pulls out the weeds of this world.

If so, Jesus has an inspiring vision for you. You will multiply yourself!!! Get the picture.

II. Mark 4:26-34 Parables of the Growing Seed and of the Mustard Seed.

In the kingdom, God is working, even when you do not see it. God was working here in Merced even before we came here. Then, BOOM!!! Immediately…

v. 34 When he was with his disciples… So that is what I am doing here.

Q: What is the Kingdom of God like?

It is a place where things happen! They are not static! They grow.

Our planned work with those departing foster care a Mustard Seed.

Merced College campus ministry is like a Mustard Seed.

UC Merced campus ministry like a mustard seed.

What is your life like? Is it showing evidence of the kingdom? Is it dynamic? Is there growth?

Our sermon today was about the Kingdom of God.

1. Are you willing to get your hands dirty—to touch the unclean?

2. Are you willing to shake things up, to the point that even your own family might think you are just a little bit crazy?

3. Are you prepared to be the undivided heart, with deep roots in God?

4. Then get ready for the seed to grow!!!